

Writing Apprehension Level of Senior High School Students in Relation to their Writing Skills

Jasmin S. Villanueva

College of Education, Pampanga State Agricultural University, San Agustin, Magalang, Pampanga, Philippines

Abstract: *This paper is a quantitative type of research which aimed to identify the level of writing apprehension of the senior high students of Pampanga State Agricultural University and its effect on their writing skills. It has been a common belief that non-native speakers consider writing as a struggle and hindrance in coming up with a good paper. They see writing as an obstacle to academic success. They often encounter what is called writing apprehension or anxiety. The study utilized the Daly- Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension to assess the writing anxiety level of the students. The total enumeration was employed in identifying the number of respondents. The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study: most of the students in the senior high school level are female. Majority of them perform very satisfactory regarding writing activities which are evident from their obtained grades in their writing subject. Also, senior high school students do not experience writing anxiety. In terms of relationship, the sex of the respondents has nothing to do with their level of writing anxiety and the writing anxiety of the senior high school students does affect their writing skills.*

Keywords: writing anxiety, writing apprehension, writing skills

1. Introduction

The language of instruction is an essential decision for academic institutes and universities. Policy governing bodies concerning language inside the classroom is often imposed by the Department of Education or the Commission on Higher Education. Such decisions impact the scholarly output of the students in all subjects. Members of the academe specifically teachers and learners are affected yet learners' perception of language is excluded, most of the time, from this vital decision.

In the Philippine setting, English is considered to be the medium of instruction. Most of the subjects taught in the curriculum are all following language policy of utilizing the medium in the discussion. One of the subjects that are mandatorily taken by the students in general education is English for Academic and Professional Purposes which requires students to write and discuss topics using English. However, since the students are non-native speakers of the language, they are facing a significant stumbling block in expressing their thoughts and explaining their ideas using the language.

Many students consider writing as a struggle and hindrance in coming up with a good paper. They see writing as an obstacle to academic success. They often encounter what is called writing apprehension or anxiety.

2. Background of the Study

The term writing apprehension was first coined by Daly and Miller (1975) to describe an person difference manifested by an avoidance of writing and situations perceived by the individual to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing.

As defined by Atay and Kurt (2006), anxiety or apprehension belongs to the affective variables category and has inspired particular interest in the field of language

acquisition and learning over the last several decades. The term writing apprehension was first introduced by Daly and Miller in 1975. However, Lee and Krashen in 2002 gave the latest definition of the word which referred writing apprehension as anxiety about writing.

Some researchers agree that the ability to write competently is a non-inherent skill. As cited by Hadley (1993), writing should be seen as a continuum of task ranging from mechanical aspects to more sophisticated actions of composition writing in the final stage. Also, writing skills are essential components in the curriculum of primary, secondary, colleges and also applies to colleges offering pre-university programs.

In the study of Hassan (2001), he pointed out that researchers of ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) have proven that writing apprehension has a positive correlation on writing performance and quality. Furthermore, Hanna (2010) found that highly apprehensive writers had a low-quality output, avoided writing assignments and procrastinated compared with those with low apprehension level.

In general, writing apprehensive are scared of writing, and students are frightened once their writing output is being evaluated. They usually avoid writing and most often than not, they submit their writing tasks or assignments late. Their writing anxiety is mirrored in their written products and their behavior and attitude about writing. In this regard, literature has also suggested techniques or means on how to restrict writing apprehension among students (Reeves, 1997; Clark, 2005; Rankin-Brown, 2006; Osturk & Cecen, 2007; Kara, 2013).

3. Writing apprehension of EFL learners

It is a common belief that foreign language learners have higher apprehension level compared with the native speakers. This scenario has attributed to the existing

problem of the students in doing their writing task. For years, different researchers have investigated the anxiety level of these learners. In 2017, Aslim Yetis conducted a study on French language teaching students to determine the causes of their anxiety. Data obtained via semi-structured interviews revealed that French writing activities, course, proficiency levels, attitudes towards writing and the composing process had been found as possible sources of writing anxiety. Another paper was conducted by Liu and Ni (2015) which discussed the language writing anxiety of Chinese University students. Findings showed that Foreign Language Writing Apprehension Scale had three principal components-low confidence in English writing, dislike of English writing and English writing apprehension evaluation. Also, both sexes are confident and liked English although there was a significant difference between the two sex and among the different proficiency groups in all the FLWAS scales. Furthermore, foreign language writing anxiety significantly negatively affected student's performance in the English writing test and some factors contributed to the students' foreign language writing anxiety.

Another study on the EFL writing anxiety was done by Gkonou in 2011. She assessed the nature of, and the relationship between the English language classroom speaking and writing anxiety of 128 Greek EFL learners in private language school settings. A significant and high correlation was found between classroom anxiety and speaking anxiety, thus, indicating that the English language classroom context is a source of speaking anxiety. Writing anxiety was found to load primarily on items relating to attitudes towards writing in English followed by the teachers and fellow students.

4. Writing anxiety and its effect

Many attempts are tried to identify the different effects of writing anxiety to the students. Cocuk, Yanpar, and Ozer (2016) studied the relationship between writing anxiety and writing disposition among secondary school students. The results showed that gender, attitude towards Turkish language courses and grade level were statistically significant for the writing apprehension test. Also, a positive linear relationship between writing anxiety and writing disposition levels were found. Furthermore, data revealed that female students are more likely to encounter writing anxiety than male students.

The effect of writing apprehension on the writing performance of the students can foretell the quality of the writing. Jahin (2012) investigated the effects of peer reviewing on writing apprehension and essay writing ability of prospective EFL teachers. The study had two sets of participants – experimental and control- who were similar regarding academic level, mother-tongue background, and target language proficiency. The experimental group participants were introduced to peer- reviewing essay writing sessions while the control group participants were taught through the traditional teacher feedback-based essay writing. Based on the findings of the study, there were positive impacts of peer reviewing on experimental group participants' writing apprehension and essay writing ability.

The researcher believes that if the learners have high writing anxiety level, they will not be proficient in using the language and will end up with unpleasant writing output. Hence, the researcher of the present study wanted to fill in the gaps and identify the relationship between writing anxiety and the students' writing skills.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study aimed to assess the writing apprehension level of the senior high school students about their writing skills.

Specifically, it aimed to:

- 1) Identify the sex of the respondents;
- 2) Assess the writing skills of the respondents;
- 3) Assess the writing apprehension level of the senior high school students
- 4) Determine if there is a significant difference between the apprehension level of both sex; and,
- 5) Determine if there is a relationship between the writing skills and the writing apprehension level of the respondents.

5. Methods

This endeavor was a quantitative type of research. It was classified as a descriptive-correlational study. A descriptive study is a type of research in which information is collected without changing the environment (i.e., nothing is manipulated). It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" concerning variables or conditions in a situation. The methods involved range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, to developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time.

On the other hand, the documentary analysis was used for the writing skills of the respondents.

Respondents

The respondents of this endeavor were the 116 Grade 12 STEM senior high school students of Pampanga State Agricultural University AY 2017-2018. The total enumeration was employed. There were three sections in this level.

Instrument

The primary data gathering instrument that was utilized in this endeavor was the Daly-Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension.

John A. Daly and Michael D. Miller made the empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension. The base score is assumed to be 78. Points are then added and subtracted from that base, as explained below, resulting in a total score which may range from 26 to 130. Items marked on the left with a plus sign (+) are scored as follows: two points are added for a checkmark in the first column; one point is added for a checkmark in the second column; none are added for the third column; one point is subtracted for the checkmark in the fourth column, and two-point is subtracted for the checkmark in the second column;

one point is subtracted for a checkmark in a second column; none are subtracted for the third column; one point is added for a checkmark in the fourth column; and two points are added for a checkmark in the fifth column. The plus and negative signs do not appear on the forms given to the students.

Procedure

The researcher wrote a letter of request to the principal of the Senior High School students to ask permission for the conduct of the study. A schedule per section was set for the distribution of the questionnaires. All questionnaires were personally distributed and retrieved by the researcher.

Grades of the respondents were also gathered from their respective teachers in English 11 or English for Academic and Professional Purposes to serve as a basis in their writing skills.

The data were treated employing frequency, and percentage to the sex, writing skills, and writing apprehension level.

To see the relationships and difference among variables, Chi-square and T-test were also employed.

6. Results

Table 1: Sex of the respondents

Sex	frequency	percentage
Male	50	45.05
Female	61	54.95
total	111	100

Table 1 shows the sex of the respondents. As shown in the table, 50 or 45.05% were males while 61 or 54.95% were females. It implies that majority of the students in the senior high school under the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) are dominated by the female.

Table 2: Writing skills of the respondents

Grade	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
90-100	24	21.62	Outstanding
85-89	57	51.35	Very Satisfactory
80-84	30	27.03	Satisfactory
75-79	0	0	Fairly Satisfactory
74-below	0	0	Did not meet expectation
total	111	100	

Legend:

- 90-100 - Outstanding
- 85-89 - Very Satisfactory
- 80-84 - Satisfactory
- 75-79 - Fairly Satisfactory
- 74-below - Did Not Meet the Expectation

Table 2 reflects the writing skills of the senior high school students. Based on the data gathered, 24 or 21.62% got a grade of 90-100 interpreted as *Outstanding*, 57 or 51.35 had a grade of 85-89 interpreted as *Very Satisfactory*, and 30 or 27.03 had a grade of 80-84 interpreted as *Satisfactory*.

The result implies that senior high school students are very satisfactory regarding their writing skills.

Table 3: Writing apprehension level of the respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
60-90	85	76.58
97-130	0	0
26-59	26	23.42
total	111	100

Legend:

- 60-96- do not experience significantly unusual level of writing apprehension
- 97-130- have a low level of writing apprehension
- 26-59- have a high level of writing apprehension

Table 3 reveals the writing apprehension of the respondents. As reflected from the data, 85 or 76.58% fell under 60-90 interpreted as no writing apprehension, and 26 or 23.42% fell under 26-59 category interpreted as the high level of writing apprehension. This implies that the majority of the senior high school students do not anymore experience writing anxiety.

Table 4: Difference between the apprehension level of both sex

variables	p-value Sig.(2tailed)	Interpretation
apprehension level (male vs. female)	0.148	no significant difference

Table 4 reflects the difference between the writing apprehension levels of both sexes. Data revealed that there was **no significant difference** between the writing apprehensions of both sexes. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that male and female respondents do not differ regarding writing anxiety level. The result of the study contradicted the findings of Cocuk, Yanpar, and Ozer (2016) which revealed that female students are more likely to encounter writing anxiety than male students.

Table 5: The relationship between the level of apprehension and writing skills of the respondents

variables	p-value Sig.(2tailed)	Interpretation
writing apprehension vs. writing skills	0.357	no significant relationship

The relationship between the level of writing apprehension and the writing skills of the respondents are shown in Table 5. As revealed, there was no significant relationship between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that the writing anxiety of the senior high school students does not affect their writing skills. The findings of the study are in contrast with the study of Hannah (2010) who found out that highly apprehensive writers had a low-quality output.

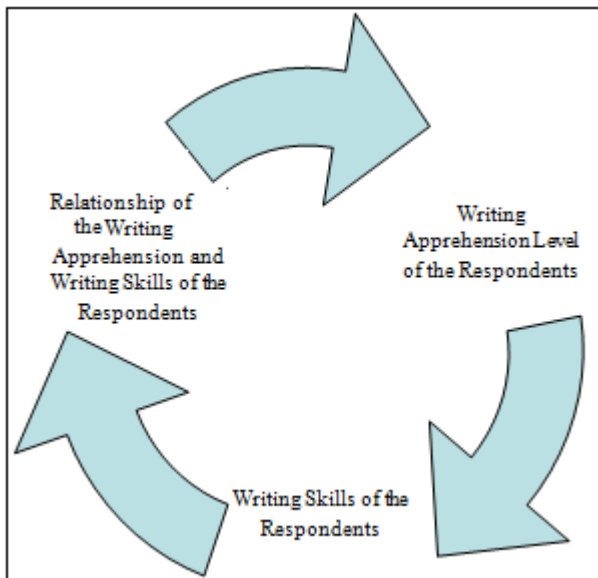


Figure 1: Research Figure of the Study

7. Discussions

- 1) Regarding the sex of the respondents, 50 or 45.05% were males while 61 or 54.95% were females. It implies that the female dominates the majority of the students in the senior high school under the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics).
- 2) Based on the data gathered regarding the writing skills of the senior high school students, 24 or 21.62% got a grade of 90-100 interpreted as *Outstanding*, 57 or 51.35 had a grade of 85-89 interpreted as *Very Satisfactory*, and 30 or 27.03 had a grade of 80-84 interpreted as *Satisfactory*. The result implies that senior high school students are very satisfactory regarding their writing skills.
- 3) Reflected from the data is the writing apprehension level of the respondents. It shows that 85 or 76.58% fell under 60-90 interpreted as **no writing apprehension** and 26 or 23.42% fell under 26-59 category interpreted as **the high level of writing apprehension**. The result implies that the majority of the senior high school students do not anymore experience writing anxiety.
- 4) Data revealed that there was **no significant difference** between the writing apprehensions of both sexes. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that male and female respondents do not differ regarding writing anxiety level. The result of the study contradicted the findings of Cocuk, Yanpar, and Ozer (2016) which revealed that female students are more likely to encounter writing anxiety than male students.
- 5) There was no significant relationship between the level of writing apprehension and the writing skills of the respondents. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. The result implies that the writing anxiety of the senior high school students does not affect their writing skills. The findings of the study are in contrast with the study of Hannah (2010) who found out that highly apprehensive writers had a low-quality output.

8. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) Most of the students in the senior high school level are female;
- 2) The students perform very satisfactory in terms of writing activities;
- 3) The senior high school students do not experience writing anxiety;
- 4) The sex of the students has nothing to do with the level of writing anxiety;
- 5) The writing anxiety of the senior high school students does not affect their writing skills.

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